

As of 2021, Liberty has more than 250,000 alumni making an impact in their respective fields and in their communities.

I congratulate Liberty University and president Jerry Prevo on this milestone and wish the institution another 50 years of success in fulfilling its mission to develop Christ-centered men and women and instill in them the values, knowledge, and skills needed to impact the world.

PROTECTING CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS OF VETERANS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. BOST) for 5 minutes.

Mr. BOST. Madam Speaker, as ranking member of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs, one of my top priorities is protecting the constitutional rights of our veterans.

Today, I want to raise awareness of a policy that strips law-abiding veterans of their Second Amendment rights; specifically, the policy that requires VA to report veterans who need help managing their VA benefits to the NICS program, thereby making it illegal for them to possess firearms.

To illustrate this practice, I would like to tell you a story about a hypothetical veteran named Joe.

Joe likes to go on hunting trips with his fellow veterans.

These trips are therapeutic for Joe. They give him stress relief and a fun hobby and an opportunity to connect with other veterans.

Unfortunately, Joe begins to suffer from headaches and memory loss, which he believes is linked to an in-service blast injury.

He files a claim for VA disability compensation benefits.

During the claims process, the VA learns that Joe struggles to pay his bills on time because of this traumatic brain injury.

This triggers the VA's requirement to determine if Joe is capable of managing his own VA benefits.

Ultimately, VA decides that Joe requires assistance handling his VA compensation payments.

The VA appoints a fiduciary to receive and manage Joe's VA benefits on his behalf.

As a result of the VA's appointment of a fiduciary, VA must—not by law, but by administrative rule—report Joe to the FBI NICS list.

And just like that, without evidence that Joe is a danger to himself or others, without involving a judge to ensure that Joe's legal rights are protected, without the opportunity for Joe to present his case in court on why he should be able to possess a firearm, Joe loses his Second Amendment rights.

That means that Joe can no longer go on hunting trips with his friends or family.

He can no longer own the hunting rifle his grandfather gave him.

And when Joe's friends learn about it and have learned what happened to

him, they decide that they would rather go without their VA benefits and services, instead of risking the same thing happening to them.

That story may be fictional, but some version of it happens across this United States all the time.

The truth is that some veterans forego seeking VA services out of concern that they would lose their constitutional rights; not because there are laws in place, but there is an administrative rule in place.

According to the VA's regulations, the purpose of the fiduciary program is to protect certain VA beneficiaries who cannot manage their VA benefits.

Clearly, the program was never intended to review someone's right to own a firearm.

A decision on a constitutional right should be left to a judicial authority, plain and simple.

Now, my bill, H.R. 1217, the Veterans 2nd Amendment Protection Act, would make sure that it is.

H.R. 1217 would prevent VA from reporting veterans to the NICS list, unless there is an order from a judge or magistrate that says the veteran may be a harm to himself or herself or others.

This bill allows VA to focus on its mission of caring for veterans, and leaves decisions about whether to strip a veteran of their constitutional rights to the judicial branch as it is supposed to be and it is for any other person who is not a veteran.

If a court finds that that veteran is a danger to themselves or others, then they should not be allowed to own a firearm.

However, it is time we end this policy that the VA has put in place, and we should make sure that we change this, we correct this problem for veterans that are discouraged from seeking help from the VA because of this rule.

We must make this change. If you want to ensure that veterans who need VA are willing to walk through VA's doors, that is how we do it. We make sure that they know their rights are protected.

I urge swift passage of H.R. 1217.

WASTEFUL SPENDING IS NOT WHAT THE UNITED STATES ECONOMY NEEDS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. ROSE) for 5 minutes.

Mr. ROSE. Madam Speaker, Democrats are determined to pass their massive socialist tax and spending bill that will turn the American Dream into a socialist nightmare.

Democrats are proposing the largest tax increase in most of our lifetimes. Their \$5.5 trillion plan—Senator BERNIE SANDERS' socialist spending plan—is the largest spending bill in our history and will take Americans out of the frying pan and into the fire.

We need targeted infrastructure improvements, but instead, this style of

cradle-to-grave Big Government gives Washington bureaucrats control over our personal and family decisions.

This spending bill promises to stretch the social safety net to every American household regardless of need. It promises extreme climate change proposals like \$3 billion for tree equity and \$12 billion for electric cars.

It promises subsidized government daycare, taxpayer-funded free college classes for illegal immigrants, universal pre-K, and new funding for gender identity issues and bias training.

The Biden administration is actively trying to gaslight the American people by claiming that this spending package will cost nothing.

Just this morning I heard the President emphasizing a single statement three times that the cost of this plan would be zero. This is an outright lie.

It will be America's middle-class families that foot the bill for Democrats' multitrillion-dollar giveaway through crippling tax increases. This massive package will not deliver opportunity or economic relief, instead it leaves rural America behind and will accelerate inflation, discourage work, and empower Washington bureaucrats.

More wasteful spending is not what our economy needs. It has already contributed to the harmful inflation that Americans across the board are experiencing. Today, inflation is more than 5 percent, the highest it has been in 30 years, more than half of my lifetime and more than the lifetimes of many Americans. Wholesale prices have risen at the fastest pace on record.

Americans do not want a government that defines them. Rather, Americans want to be able to define their own government.

We can meet our country's funding needs without jeopardizing our economic recovery and saddling future generations with more debt.

I ran for Congress because I am worried about the country that we are going to leave to my sons, Guy and Sam, and to the children and grandchildren and great-grandchildren of every American. I cannot in good conscience support a proposal that will mortgage their future, that will imperil their freedom and liberty.

But Democrats are bent on spending massively to enact their radical far-left socialist policies that will change our economy, change our Nation, and change our fiscal future for the worse.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded to refrain from engaging in personalities toward the President.

THE UNITED STATES ECONOMY IS IN TROUBLE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida (Mr. BILIRAKIS) for 5 minutes.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Madam Speaker, I rise today because our economy is in trouble. We are headed in the wrong direction. We must reverse course.